

Hong Kong and Guangdong Jointly Launch “Project CLEAN AIR” Seminar on World Environment Day Marks New Initiative to Reduce Emissions and Build an Environment-friendly Society

Call for clean production with focus on energy conservation, lower consumption,
emissions reduction and efficiency improvement

June 5, 2007

Despite the economic prosperity it has created, massive industrialisation has brought with it a deteriorating urban living environment. In search of a solution to this problem, the Hong Kong and Guangdong business communities unveiled a new joint initiative at a recent seminar in Guangzhou. Coinciding with the 36th World Environment Day on 5 June 2007, the Training Seminar



on Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction brought together some 300 delegates representing different business organizations in Hong Kong and Guangdong to discuss Project CLEAN AIR with the focus on energy conservation, lower consumption, emissions reduction and efficiency improvement. The event was organized by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade – Guangdong Subcouncil; the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce; Sustainable Development Subgroup, Greater Pearl River Delta Business Council (GPRDBC); the Guangdong Association of Environmental Protection Industry, and the Hong Kong Business Coalition on the Environment.

Cross-border initiative to clean up the air

At the seminar, presentations on the environmental conditions of Hong Kong and Guangdong as well as implementation measures for the project were given by Mr Si Qingwei, Vice President, Guangdong Subcouncil of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade; Mr Alex Fong, CEO of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce; The Hon Cheng Yiu Tong, Convenor of the GPRDBC Sustainable Development Hong Kong Subgroup and Chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, and Mr Hu Qingxin, Convenor of the GPRDBC Sustainable Development Guangdong Subgroup and Chairman of the Guangdong Association of Environmental Protection Industry.



At the opening ceremony of the seminar, Mr Alex Fong said, “Amid China’s phenomenal growth, the conflict between economic expansion and environmental resources has become increasingly acute, despite the progress in infrastructure development being achieved. The public has reacted strongly to the pollution of the environment. Unless the pace of economic restructuring is quickened and growth patterns changed, we will not have the resources, environment or capacity required to maintain sustainable economic growth. Only by focusing on resources conservation and clean production can we quickly put economic progress back on the right track.”

Mr Fong added, “The excessive emissions have led to global warming, an issue of growing concern worldwide. Further efforts to save energy and reduce emissions are our responsibility and key to tackling the problem of climate change.” He said that in Hong Kong and Guangdong, the most economically vibrant region in China, one should not just be concerned about economic development, but also be mindful of the quality of our living environment and the severity of the environmental issue. He urged the businesses and environmentalists across the border to work together and commit themselves to bringing their respective governments to launch the new project for the benefit of self-survival and of mankind.

Mr Si Qingwei said that as the promoter of the mechanism for the Hong Kong/Guangdong Private Sector Cooperation, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade – Guangdong Subcouncil hoped to work with its counterpart in Hong Kong for more exchanges and cooperation to drive clean production and improve the environment. It will also provide suggestions for cross-border cooperation in maintaining sustainable development.

The Hon Cheng Yiu Tong said that GPRDBC, through joint efforts with the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce and other members of the business community, would work conscientiously to improve the air quality of the Greater Pearl River Delta Region. He also expressed the hope to introduce sophisticated experiences and practices from Hong Kong and overseas into mainland China and when appropriate, offer solid experience and well-developed practices to the Hong Kong and Guangdong governments to help implement the clean air project.

Smoggy weather commonplace in PRD due to poor air quality

At the training seminar, Dr Chen Ying, Head of Pollution Control Department, Guangdong Environmental Protection Bureau; Dr Jeanne Ng, Vice Chairman, Air and Waste Management Association – Hong Kong Section and Mr Qu Jun, Director of Corporate Development, Guangdong Association of



Environmental Protection Industry, made presentations on “Air Quality Environment in Guangdong and Management Strategies”, “Corporate Strategies in Implementing Energy Saving and Emissions Reduction” and “Effective Measures to Save Energy and Reduce Emissions” respectively. Ir Cary Chan, Head of Technical Services of Swire Properties and Mr Feng Guoxiang, Deputy General Manager of Zhong Cheng Chemicals also shared their

experiences and insights in energy conservation and emissions reduction with the delegates.

On the air pollution index and environmental conditions of PRD, Dr Chen Ying said in his presentation that despite the fundamentally good air quality in the region, some areas are dominated by smoggy weather one third of the year and the situation is alarming.



Dr Chen said Guangdong's 21 prefecture-level cities had basically achieved Class II air quality under international standards, but the daily average concentrations of emissions found in eight cities had exceeded the limits, with NO₂, SO₂ and respirable particles as the three main pollutants. Among these cities, Guangzhou has experienced the most serious pollution by SO₂, NO₂, ozone and respirable particles, with one third of the year dominated by smoggy weather – a reflection of the grave situation of air pollution.

Citing the monitoring results in 2005 of air quality in the Greater Pearl River Delta focusing on Hong Kong and Guangdong, Dr Chen said that the 13 monitoring stations in Guangdong and three others in Hong Kong had recorded relatively high concentrations of SO₂, NO₂ and ozone in the air. According to monitoring results in October 2006, one of the cities had seen 18 days of smoggy weather in a month, 11 of which were so serious as to warrant a pre-warning, reflecting the deterioration of local air quality at an alarming rate. Currently, Guangzhou, Foshan and Dongguan are the three most polluted cities in the Pearl River Delta Region (PRD).

Dr Chen said concerted efforts among the governments, businesses and the public are needed to control air pollution – a target that can only be achieved with the necessary economic, technological, legal and policy support.

Project CLEAN AIR starts with corporate energy conservation and emission control

As an important issue discussed at the recent seminar, energy conservation and emission control aroused deep concerns among the delegates. Project CLEAR AIR, as a voluntary initiative launched by Hong Kong's business community, has met with approval from the HKSAR government.

In his policy report in October 2005, Chief Executive Donald Tsang expressed delight at and encouragement for the Clean Air Charter, describing it as a “very important initiative” and also commending the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce for taking this project forward. He signed the Charter on behalf of the HKSAR government and urged more corporations to pitch in for better air quality in PRD.

So far over 600 corporations in Hong Kong and PRD have signed the Charter and the latest seminar in Guangdong was a sequel to the “clean air” campaign launched in Hong Kong.

Dr Jeanne Ng said that Project CLEAN AIR should at the most basic level start with corporate efforts in energy conservation and emissions control. This should be the foundation

without which one cannot even talk about “cleaning up the air”. She urged corporations to be more environment-conscious and to place the long-term interests of the environment ahead of short-term gains.

Mr Qu Jun, who is also the Deputy Director of Guangdong Clean Production Centre, said the “Notice on Integrated Measures for Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction” promulgated on June 4 clearly sets out the objectives and tasks of energy conservation and emissions control, reflecting the State’s concerns about environmental care and the importance attached to it.

Green targets focus on energy conservation, lower consumption, emissions control and efficiency improvement

At a press interview on June 4, Ma Kai, Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission, said that China would seek to tackle the problem of environmental pollution through mitigation, control and recycling efforts in coming years. According to the overall target set by the State Environmental Protection Administration, energy consumption per unit of GDP should go down 20% by 2010 with the share of renewable energy rising from less than 7% to 10%, to grow further to 16% by 2020. Guangdong’s target is to maintain the air quality level of urban centres at Class II for over 90% of the year, 100% coverage of fume control, an over 90% compliance rate of automobile tail gas emissions, and control of SO₂ emissions at 1.1 million tonnes/year. The focus will be on protecting water sources and control of water pollution in key locations. In the prevention of air pollution, emphasis will be placed on desulphurisation in power plants and control of automobile tail gas emissions in order to contain the spread of pollution and develop PRD into an environment-friendly region.

Under the 11th Five-year plan for environmental protection and ecosystem development, Guangdong province has proposed a series of measures for implementing and monitoring energy conservation and emissions reduction and for developing a solid system for coordinating such efforts. The only way out for private-sector and foreign-owned enterprises in the province is to work towards an environment-friendly community founded on the values of energy conservation, clean production, recycling and emissions reduction. Any enterprise trying to shirk its responsibility for environmental care will be duly punished. Mr Ma added that if the existing production and consumption trends continue, mankind would need two planets’ worth of natural resources every year by 2050. The Project CLEAN AIR, now being pursued by the governments and businesses in Hong Kong and Guangdong, reflects the importance attached to environmental protection by the State and local governments and the hope for the business community to support clean production for the benefit of energy conservation and emissions reduction.